

Message Text

SECRET

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41

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /031 W

----- 072866

O R 091240Z SEPT 74

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7645

INFO CINCPAC

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 PHNOM PENH 12097

EXDIS

PASS DIA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, MOPS, CB

SUBJECT: APPROACH TO GKR BY ENEMY SECTOR COMMANDER TO ARRANGE
RALLYING OR CEASE FIRE IN PLACE

REF: A. PHNOM PENH 12061

B. PHNOM PENH 11907

C. PHNOM PENH 11844

1. INDONESIAN CHARGE AND DEFENSE ATTACHE RETURNED PHNOM PENH
AT NOON SEPTEMBER 9. CHARGE AND POL/MIL COUNSELOR
CALLED ON THEM IN ORDER TO RECONCILE COLONEL THACH RENG'S
ACCOUNT TO GEN. PALMER (REF A) OF WHAT TRANSPIRED IN HIS
MEETING WITH PAK NEAM AT INDONESIAN EMBASSY ON SEPT. 4
WITH OUR UNDERSTANDING BASED ON INDONESIANS' ACCOUNT
OF SAME MEETING (REF B).

2. DJANI AND BAMBANG SAID THAT AT MEETING IN QUESTION
PAK NEAM WAS ACCOMPANIED BY TWO "ADVISORS", FOR TOTAL
OF THREE PERSONS ON THE OTHER SIDE. THACH RENG HAD
COME PREPARED WITH A LIST OF THE GKR'S OB HOLDINGS OF
WHO IS WHO IN KC SECTOR 33, A LIST WHICH DID NOT CONTAIN
PAK NEAM'S NAME. FOR THIS REASON THACH RENG APPARENTLY
CONCLUDED THAT PAK NEAM WAS NOT A GENUINE KC LEADER
FROM INSIDE SECTOR 33, BUT RATHER AN INTERMEDIARY, AS HE TOLD
GEN. PALMER (REF A). DJANI POINTED OUT TO CHARGE

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THAT IN THE LIST OF NAMES (WHICH ACTUALLY NUMBERED 22)

OF SECTOR 33 KC LEADERS GIVEN BY COL. BAMBANG TO DATT AND POL/MIL COUNSELOR ON SEPT. 4 (REF C), A NUMBER WERE DESCRIBED AS "LIAISON OFFICERS." THIS DESCRIPTION DJANI TOOK TO MEAN PEOPLE WHO MOVE BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES ON VARIOUS ERRANDS, OR, IN EFFECT, "INTER-MEDIARIES." DJANI BELIVED THE PROBLEM WAS ONE OF CREDIBILITY FOR THACH RENG, WHO EVIDENTLY FELT HE HAD TO KNOW POSITIVELY THAT HE WAS DEALING WITH A RANKING SECTOR 33 KC, PREFERABLY PERHAPS THE DIVISION COMMANDER AND SENIOR MILITARY OFFICER IDENTIFIED AS THACH YOEURN (REF B, PARA 4). DJANI REITERATED THAT THACH RENG HAD GIVEN PAK NEAM A PERSONAL AND OFFICIAL GUARANTEE OF SAFETY FOR SUCH A SENIOR KC IF HE WOULD COME OVER FOR DISCUSSIONS, PRESUMABLY AGAIN UNDER INDONESIAN EMBASSY AUSPICES.

3. DJANI THEN ASKED THE CHARGE'S ADVICE AS TO HOW BEST TO PROCEED FROM HERE, TO MOVE THE MATTER ALONG. DJANI FELT THE BALL WAS IN PAK NEAM'S COURT TO GO BACK, TO SEE IF ONE OF THE SENIOR KC CMONG THACH RENG'S HOLDINGS WOULD AGREE TO COME ACROSS FOR DISCUSSIONS, THEN LET INDONESIANS KNOW SO THEY COULD PASS THE WORD TO THACH RENG. CHARGE WONDERED WHETHER THACH RENG WAS BEST MAN FOR THE JOB ON GKR SIDE, AND DJANI SAID HE HAD WONDERED SAME THING. CHARGE STRESSED EVENTUAL ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF INVOLVING TOP FANK LEADERSHIP (I.E., SOSTHENE) BECAUSE ONLY THEY COULD PREVENT MILITARY OPERATIONS IN SECTOR IN QUESTION, AND THUS GUARANTEE EFFECTIVENESS OF CEASEFIRE ON GKR SIDE, WHILE AT SAME TIME SQUELCHING ANY GRUMBLING OR UNHAPPINESS DOWN THE LINE IN FANK RANKS. THACH RENG WAS NOT IN A POSITION HIMSELF TO ACCOMPLISH EITHER OF THESE OBJECTIVES.

4. IT WAS AGREED THAT IDEAL PERSON FOR BOTH INDONESIANS AND AMERICANS TO DEAL WITH ON GKR SIDE WOULD BE PRIME MINISTER LONG BORET, IF HE WERE ONLY HERE. CHARGE SAID WE EXPECTED HIM BACK IN A DAY OR SO. DJANI WONDERED IF IT MIGHT NOT BE GOOD IDEA FOR HIM AND CHARGE TO CALL ON LONG BORET TOGETHER, AS SOON AS HE RETURNED IN ORDER TO USE HIM AS A CHANNEL TO FEED SUGGESTIONS TO THE MARSHAL,

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ON A DAILY BASIS IF NEED BE. CHARGE AGREED TO LET DJANI KNOW AS SOON AS WE LEARN OF PRIMIN'S ETA. DJANI ASKED IF AT SOME POINT SOMEONE FROM AMERICAN MISSION WOULD BE WILLING TO MEET WITH KC REPRESENTATIVES, PERHAPS UNDER INDONESIAN AUSPICES, IF ONLY TO ASSURE THEM THAT US DID NOT OPPOSE AND IN FACT SUPPORTED SUCH A CEASE FIRE/RALLYING INITIATIVE. CHARGE INDICATED WE WOULD CONSIDER IT THOROUGHLY AT PROPER TIME, IF THIS SEEMED USEFUL

OR NECESSARY. COMMENT: DEPARTMENT'S GUIDANCE ON THIS ASPECT WOULD BE APPRECIATED IN CASE MATTER DOES COME UP. SUCH A MEETING, IF IT OCCURRED, WOULD REQUIRE ATTENDANCE BY MISSION OFFICER OF SUFFICIENT RANK TO BE CREDIBLE TO OTHER SIDE. END COMMENT.

5. CONVERSATION WITH INDONESIANS ENDED WITH MUTUAL PROMISES TO KEEP IN TOUCH RE ANY DEVELOPMENTS ON DAILY BASIS, OR MORE OFTEN, AS APPROPRIATE.

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ACTION SS-30

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7646

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 PHNOM PENH 12097

EXDIS

6. MEANWHILE, ON MORNING OF SEPT. 9 CHIEF MEDTC HAD USUAL DAILY PRIVATE METING WITH C-INC SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ, WHO TOLD PALMER HE HAD DECIDED THAT THE MAN TO GET INTO THE PICTURE WAS BRIG. GEN. NORODOM CHANTARANGSEY, COMMANDER OF MILITARY REGION 2 AT KOMPONG SPEU. SOSTHENE HAD SUMMONED CHANTARANGSEY TO PHNOM PENH THAT DAY. LATER IN THE DAY HE CALLED PALMER BACK TO TELL HIM OF HIS CONVERSATION WITH MILITARY REGION 2 COMMANDER WHO, IN SOSTHENE'S OPINION, WAS BEST PERSON AMONG RANKING FANK PERSONALITIES TO PROBE SUCH AN OFFER. CHANTARANGSY BEGAN BY EXPRESSING CONSIDERABLE SKEPTICISM ABOUT GENUINENESS OF SUCH OFFERS, AS HE HAD HAD MUCH PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THIS SORT OF THING. HOWEVER, HE SAID HE WOULD PERSONALLY PUT OUT HIS OWN FEELERS TO SECTOR 33 LEADERSHIP TO TEST THEIR INTENTIONS. SOSTHENE TOLD CHANTARANGSEY HE WAS TO KEEP THIS ABSOLUTELY TO HIMSELF, AND TO REPORT TO NO ONE EXCEPT SOSTHENE, OR IN HIS ABSENCE TO GEN. PALMER, WHO COULD BE TRUSTED IMPLICITLY.

7. LATE IN THE AFTERNOON OF SEPT. 9 GEN. PALMER RECEIVED PHONE CALL FROM SOSTHENE, WHO REPORTED THAT AN INTERMEDIARY FOR SECTOR 33 KC WAS IN HIS OUTER OFFICE, WAITING TO SEE HIM. PALMER SUBSEQUENTLY CALLED ON SOSTHENE, WHO SAID THAT THE EMISSARY HAD TURNED OUT TO BE A FORMER COLONEL IN THE NATIONAL POLICE WELL KNOWN TO SOSTHENE. EMISSARY SAID HE REPRESENTED PAK NEAM, WHO WOULD COME TO SEE SOSTHENE AT 0800 HOURS ON 10 SEPTEMBER. EMISSARY LEFT
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WITH SOSTHENE A PAPER IN KHMER WITH IDENTICAL LISTS OF HEAVY EQUIPMENT AND PERSONNEL CONTAINED IN THE LETTER SHOWN BY THE INDONESIANS TO THE MARSHAL ON SEPT. 3. CURIOUSLY ENOUGH THIS EMISSARY'S PAPER WAS DATED AUGUST 21, AND BORE IN THE MARGIN LON NOL'S NOTATION: "SHOW TO LONG BORET AND EK PROEUNG." SOSTHENE TOLD EMISSARY TO ASK PAK NEAM TO BRING CLEAN COPY OF SAME LETTER TO 10 SEPTEMBER MEETING, SO THAT HE WOULD HAVE A COPY WITHOUT THE MARSHAL'S NOTATION (IN ORDER TO AVOID LATER PROBLEMS WITH THE MARSHAL). SOSTHENE PROMISED HE WOULD SEE PAK NEAM, STUDY QUESTION, AND HAVE AN ANSWER FOR PAK NEAM SAME AFTERNOON. GENERAL PALMER VOLUNTEERED EMBASSY'S GOOD OFFICES TO SOSTHENE IN ANY WAY HELPFUL TO BRING MATTER TO A DECISION, INCLUDING WILLINGNESS OF CHARGE AND PALMER TO SEE THE MARSHAL WITH SOSTHENE IF NEED BE. IN THE MORNING WE WILL INFORM INDONESIANS OF THIS DEVELOPMENT, IN ORDER TO PREVENT ANY MIXUP WITH OTHER CHANNELS (E.G., THACH RENG) WHICH ARE NOW INVOLVED.

8. COMMENT: WE HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT PAK NEAM IS VERY ANXIOUS TO GET THIS BUSINESS ARRANGED, AND HAS BEEN FRUSTRATED IN HIS PREVIOUS EFFORTS WITH THE MARSHAL AND HIS COHORTS. WE BELIEVE THINGS ARE NOW MOVING INTO THE PROPER CHANNEL, I.E., SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ, WHO SHOULD BE ABLE TO PULL IT OFF, WITH OUR HELP IF AND AS NECESSARY.
KEELEY

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